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he finds in the success of his divisions, though in certain cases he admits failure. He takes the prevailing measures to be ternary (three beats to the line) and quaternary; a quinary he suspects. What he says about meters is good; the value of his work lies, however, not in his scheme of strophes, but in his suggestions for the emendation and translation of the Hebrew text. For this purpose he employs the versions, the laws of meter, and conjecture. Not all of his proposals of change are convincing, but his discussions of metrical forms and doublets and his translations are welcome contributions to the understanding of this most disorderly text. He regards the fragments as representing a genuine text.

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DECIPHERMENT OF THE SAFAITIC INSCRIPTIONS.¹

In May, 1900, Dr. Littmann, who was a member of the American Archæological Expedition in Syria, for an account of which see *American Journal of Archæology*, Second Series, Vol. IV, 1900, No. 4, pp. 415-40, made an excursion through the Harra and the Ruhbe, and secured copies of a good number of inscriptions in the so-called Safaitic characters, some one hundred and thirty-four of which had never been published. A complete edition of these inscriptions will be issued later as part of the memoirs of the expedition. Meanwhile Dr. Littmann has published this preliminary study, both to call anew the attention of scholars to this branch of Semitic epigraphy, and especially to invite discussion of the new readings which he proposes for some of these characters. For he believes that he has found in these inscriptions the entire Arabic alphabet, and that, while Halévy (*Essai sur les Inscriptions du Safa, Extrait du Journal asiatique*, Paris, 1882) identified correctly the characters corresponding to sixteen letters of this alphabet, his identifications of the remaining twelve letters are incorrect. As to these twelve letters Littmann agrees with Praetorius in five and disagrees with him in seven. In support of his views he gives names and inscriptions, taken from the works of de Vogüé and Dussaud, for the most part, transcribes them, and in many cases gives translations and brief annotations. This material, together with the plates at the end of the volume, enables the reader to test the author's conclusions.

Dr. Littmann clearly points out the preliminary character of this study, and expressly disavows any claim to its completeness, but he has made out a good case, and has done a valuable piece of work. He deserves thanks for acquainting his fellow-students so promptly with the results of his investigations. The appearance of the complete edition of his own collection of inscriptions will be eagerly watched for by all interested in Semitic epigraphy.

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¹ZUR ENTZIFFERUNG DER ŞAFA-INSCHRIFTEN. Von Enno Littmann. Mit sieben autographierten Tafeln. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1901. ix + 76 pp.